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SHETLAND AND ITS INDUSTRIES.

BY SHERIFF RAMPINI.

IN TWO PARTS.—I. INLAND INDUSTRIES.

WITHIN the last few years, and particularly within the last decade, 'the naked melancholy isles of farthest Thule' have been attracting a considerable amount of public attention, from the extraordinary progress which they have made, and are still making, in the development of their resources, and in the intellectual and social advancement of their inhabitants. Not the least remarkable feature in this progress is the manifestation of an energetic and intelligent public spirit, which is probably the best guarantee for their increasing prosperity, and which is already showing good results in every department of social life. It is not so long ago that the grievances of the oppressed inhabitants of Zetland were a fruitful topic of discussion amongst all interested in these remote islands. So late as the year 1875, a pamphlet was published under the title of 'Semi-serfdom in the Shetland Islands,' in which the unhappy condition of the Shetland peasant was set forth with considerable force and no less considerable warmth in a letter to a Member of Parliament. If there was a certain amount of exaggeration in depicting the Shetland fisherman and crofter as an hereditary bondsman, cowed, apathetic, insufficiently fed, miserably housed, destitute of medical aid, totally uneducated either in spiritual or in secular instruction—the Report of the Truck Commission in 1872 lent at least some weight to the assertion, and disclosed certain abuses of which he undoubtedly had good right to complain.

But it is satisfactory to think that these are in a great measure things of the past, and that the Shetland peasant of to-day, as well as those above him in the social scale—fishcurers and landlords alike—is as devout a believer in the new social gospel of co-operation, energy, industry, and thrift, as his most ardent well-wishers may for the present desire. Traces, it

must be admitted, of the old leaven still exist; the old spirit of monopoly and class interest is not yet wholly extinct. But it is powerless to withstand the increasing force of public opinion; and soon the capital, and with it the influence of the islands, will be in the hands of those to whom it was for centuries denied, and who, if present indications are not deceitful, may be trusted to employ it in promoting the best interests of their sea-girt home. At the present day, there is probably no more contented a peasantry within the whole of Her Majesty's dominions than that of Shetland. The relations between landlord and tenant, between fisherman and curer, are of the most amicable description; and if the remarkable increase in certain branches of the industries of the islands has for the moment operated in effecting a modification of the condition under which business is transacted between these last two, this is a matter which cannot fail to right itself without the slightest friction and at no distant date. The worst office that could possibly be done to the Shetland fisherman and crofter would be to insinuate a suspicion that the oppressions of the last generation are being perpetuated in this.

To those to whom the rise of a hitherto obscure community is a subject of interest, as well as to those who are anxious to see the last vestiges of a condition of social manners, customs, and habits of thought which is fast disappearing from our midst, we can confidently recommend a visit to Shetland. Only fifty years ago, such an excursion would have to be made by sailing-vessel, and the time occupied on the voyage would probably have been a week at the least. But the powerful and comfortable steamers of the North of Scotland, Orkney and Shetland Steam Navigation Company, now make the run of two hundred and fifty miles from Leith in thirty-six hours; and with mails thrice a week in summer and twice in winter, a trip to Thule has been brought within the fast-enlarging circle of ordinary holiday tours.

Nor need the discomforts of the voyage deter

the stranger. Such crucial passages as the entrance to the Moray Firth, the crossing of the Pentland Firth and the Roost of Sumburgh may, in the ordinary case, be traversed in summer without the slightest discomfort. It is otherwise, no doubt, during the boisterous gales of spring and autumn. But at such seasons—if for no other reason than that Shetland is not then seen at its best—the traveller had better stay at home. The cold gray skies, the tearing winds, the thick fogs which occasionally visit the islands, are apt to exercise a depressing effect upon his imagination, and lead him to think of Shetland as a desert of peat-hag and weathered rock—of ‘mosse and mount and wilderness, quhairin are divers great wateris.’ No impression could be more unjust. If the hundred islands, holms, and skerries which go to make up the Shetland archipelago are destitute of the soft graces which mountain and river, tree and stream, confer upon more southerly regions, they are not without a beauty of their own. Apart from their unequalled rock-scenery—their iron-bound cliffs, their insulated stacks, their penetrating caves, their deeply-indented creeks and voes and gyoës—they can show many a green valley, many a solitary loch, many a gravelly beach covered with fishermen’s cottages, and with heaps of cod and tusk and ling drying in the sun, which would form no unworthy subject for the artist’s pencil. Alike in landscape and seascape their charms attract a yearly increasing crowd of summer tourists; and the two excellent hotels and the numerous lodging-houses of Lerwick are taxed to their utmost to supply the accommodation which so large an influx of strangers demands.

It is in Lerwick, the capital of the islands, and a town of about four thousand inhabitants, that this blending of the old and the new to which we have already referred as being so characteristic of modern Shetland, is principally observable. Of comparatively modern erection—its first house was built only two hundred years ago—it has already an old and a new town. The old is still the business part of the town. It consists of a single paved street, following the outline of the bay, and so narrow in some places that a four-wheeled vehicle can with difficulty thread its way through. It is distinguished by its old-fashioned small-windowed houses, whose gray gables abut into the sea, to facilitate, it is said, the landing in olden times of many a pipe of Rhenish wine and many a ‘graybeard’ of Hollands which never paid toll to His Majesty’s Exchequer. From this single street, steep lanes or *trances*, crowded with mean dwellings, lead up to the ridge called the Hillhead, on which the new town is situated. On this ridge—of which Fort Charlotte and the Anderson Institute, an important educational establishment, form respectively the northern and southern extremities—are to be found the seven churches of which Lerwick can boast, the

county buildings, the handsome town-hall and municipal buildings now in course of erection, the public and infant schools, and the villas and cottages of the richer class of citizens. The whole of this new town has sprung up within the last fifteen or sixteen years. The first feu was allotted in the year 1866; and if building proceeds at the same rate as at present, before another fifteen years have expired, the overcrowding which is the main drawback to the prosperity of Lerwick may be expected to be a thing of the past.

At present, the municipal authorities experience great difficulty in enforcing the statutory provisions as to lodging-house accommodation. Since the establishment of the Royal Naval Reserve force in 1859, Lerwick has steadily advanced, until it is now one of the principal stations in the kingdom. During the six months from 1st October to 31st March, the town receives annually an influx of about eleven hundred men. The course of instruction lasts for twenty-eight days, and the average number of men on drill daily is one hundred and ninety-eight. To provide lodgings for so many fishermen and seamen severely taxes the resources of the town, as the number of its inhabited houses is as yet only nine hundred and sixty-seven. But as each first-class Reserve man receives one guinea per week when on drill and six pounds retaining fee, and each second-class man nineteen shillings and threepence drill-pay and two pounds twelve shillings retaining fee, whereby a large sum of money is brought annually into Shetland, the local authorities are obliged to shut their eyes to a state of things of which they seriously disapprove, rather than lose the benefit which so great an increase of wealth must necessarily produce to a poor country like Zetland.

In respect of lighting, water, and sewerage, Lerwick, though its sanitary condition is not yet ideally perfect, has made great strides within the last few years. Gas was introduced in the spring of 1856 by a Company, which—taking the average of the last ten years, and with gas at the almost prohibitory rate of from eleven shillings and sixpence to nine shillings and twopence per thousand cubic feet—already pays a dividend of six per cent. The elaborate system of water-supply and sewerage, carried out by the Messrs Leslie, C.E. of Edinburgh, at a cost of four thousand four hundred and fifty pounds for water, and two thousand three hundred and sixty-five pounds for sewerage, was established in 1871. The new Cemetery, on the steep promontory ending in the conical stack called the Knab, to the south of the town, and beyond its actual limits, was opened in 1874. Altogether, it only needs a public hospital, a combination poorhouse, and a commodious covered-in market—all of which will doubtless come in due time—to make Lerwick one of the best equipped towns in the whole of the north of Scotland.

Of the public works presently in progress, the most important are the town-hall—of which the foundation stone was laid by the Duke of Edinburgh, on the 24th January 1882—and the harbour-works. The former is being erected by a limited Company, from the designs of Mr Alexander Ross, the eminent architect of Inverness Cathedral; and looking to the very numerous gifts

of stained-glass windows, stone carvings, ornamental mantel-pieces, and other decorations with which it is being enriched, it bids fair to be one of the most interesting buildings of its kind in the kingdom. Besides a spacious and handsome Hall for public meetings and entertainments, a Burgh Court Room, police cells, and Town Clerk's office, it will provide accommodation for the Customs and Inland Revenue, for one of the two Masonic lodges in Lerwick, for the Good Templars, and for the Shetland Club. The harbour-works consist of a stone and iron pier, and a spacious esplanade extending almost the whole length of the town, and which it is expected will relieve to a great extent the plethora of traffic which at times renders Commercial Street inconveniently crowded. The cost of these works is estimated at fifteen thousand pounds.

In all those minor matters which conduce to the amenities of life, the inhabitants of Lerwick show a praiseworthy energy. A Reading-room with daily telegrams has recently been established by the Shetland Literary and Scientific Society, whose Library and Book-club form the sole means of recreation which the Shetlanders at present possess. For the last three years, the regatta of the Lerwick Boating Club has been the means of providing the Lerwegians with an annual holiday, which is much appreciated. Within the last few months, a Horticultural Society has been instituted to encourage the cultivation and distribution of flowers, principally amongst the poorer classes. Besides this, Lerwick possesses football, cricket, and swimming clubs; a choral society which gives two or three concerts annually; and lawn-tennis finds in the far North some of its most diligent votaries.

It speaks volumes for the law-abiding character of the Shetlanders that the whole police force in the islands consists of only two men—a county and a burgh superintendent. Serious crime is all but unknown. Drunkenness, even during the festivities of Yuletide, is almost entirely absent from the streets. During the first fortnight of January of this year, six hundred persons donned the Blue Ribbon, and of these upwards of four hundred took the pledge.

Nothing strikes the stranger so forcibly on his first visit to Lerwick as the essentially Norse character of the town and its inhabitants. The names on the shop-doors, the *patois* of the lower classes, the street scenes, the physical appearance of the people, all remind one of Scandinavia. The sandalled peat-women, carrying home their winter fuel in straw baskets, called 'keyshies,' on their backs, from the Stony Hill, knitting assiduously as they tramp along; the blue-eyed fishermen with their circular piltock nets over their shoulders; the panniered ponies, laden with geese and fowl and other country produce; the long fish-spears hanging up outside every cottage door; the paucity of carts and carriages—give Lerwick a foreign complexion which is both picturesque and unique. And when, in early summer, the 'booms' and luggers of the Dutch fishing-fleet crowd its landlocked harbours, and petticoated, red-shirted, 'clumper'-shod Hollanders, smoking halfpenny cigars, throng its streets, the visitor may well rub his eyes, and wonder if he has not mistaken his destination, and landed in some sea-faring place of the Netherlands or Sweden,

instead of the Scottish port for which his ticket had been taken.

If perchance he penetrates into the country districts of the islands, this feeling will be intensified. The Shetland 'toun,' with its straw-thatched cottages, its peat-stacks, its flocks of errant geese, and its patches of *runrig** cultivation, is unlike any Scotch or English hamlet. Beyond its turf-dikes is the 'scattald' or common, in which each cottager has a right of property in proportion to the extent of merk-lands† he holds within the 'toun.' Here the peasant depastures his stock—his flocks of black, white, brown, and moorat-coloured (a brownish red) sheep; his herds of shaggy wild-eyed ponies; and during the day at least, his short-legged, small-horned, handsome little kine. Here he cuts his peats for the winter, using for that purpose a spade-like instrument called a 'tusker,' which lifts each peat entire. Here he collects his store of manure for the farmwork of his little croft, 'scalping' the turf for that purpose, to the no small detriment, it must be confessed, of the beauty of the landscape. And here, in some sheltered spot, where the soil is rich and dry, he establishes his 'plantie-cruive' or kail-yard, surrounding it with a dry-stone dike, to prevent the intrusion of sheep.

Notwithstanding the considerable advance that has been made within the last thirty or forty years, agriculture in Shetland—probably for the very good reason that Shetland is a grazing rather than an arable county—is still in a backward condition. The old wooden hand-plough, still to be seen in some parts of Norway, and once universal, has almost entirely disappeared. But the harrow with wooden teeth, and the small sharp spear-shaped spade with a wooden foot-piece, which is always worked down-hill, are yet in common use. Manure is carried in straw baskets, chiefly on the backs of women. The sickle is used in reaping, the scythe being seldom employed except for mowing the meadows. In the 'ben'-end of almost every cottage—for the poorest has its 'but' and its 'ben'—is a rude kiln for drying corn. 'This kiln, of an oblong form, is called a 'cinny,' is furnished with ribs of wood, and covered with oat-straw called 'gloy,' and the grain is laid on the top. In an opening about one foot square in the end of the kiln, a gentle peat-fire is kept up till the corn is sufficiently dried. The grain is then taken off, put into a straw basket called a 'skeb,' and rubbed while warm under the feet, to detach the beard and dust. It is next winnowed between two doors where there is a current of wind, or in the open air; put into another straw basket called a 'buddy,' and carried to the mill to be ground. But the old Shetland mill, spanning a mountain stream, with its wooden horizontal water-wheel and its primitive machinery, is now scarcely ever seen in use.

* *Runrig*, a term applied to a kind of cultivation once common throughout Scotland, in which the alternate patches or ridges of a field belonged to different proprietors or tenants.

† *Merk-lands* is another term, once common to all Scotland, and now generally obsolete. The extent of land was so designated from the number of merks—a merk representing one shilling and a penny sterling—which the holder annually paid by way of tax to the sovereign or superior from whom the lands were held.

Bere—a coarse kind of barley—and oats are the principal grains cultivated. The 'voar' or seed-time does not commence till the end of March.

Most of the work on the crofts of the peasantry is done by the weaker sex; for here, as in other essentially fishing communities, 'the woman is the better man.' But judging from present appearances, the days of the Shetland crofter are numbered, as every year greater attention is being paid to fishing. Such a result would undoubtedly be a benefit to Shetland. Large farms, properly drained, with thrashing-machines, reaping-machines, and a regular rotation of crops, such as those which already exist and prosper in some parts of the islands, would supplant the slovenly and wasteful *petite culture* which at present too exclusively prevails; and the Shetland peasant, freed from a labour for which he is unfitted, would reap his harvest from the sea, which is his peculiar, and after all his richest freehold, and the various aspects of which we shall consider in our next paper.

ONE FALSE, BOTH FAIR;

OR, A HARD KNOT.

BY JOHN B. HARWOOD.

CHAPTER XIV.—HALF AN HOUR TOO SOON.

AN invitation to dinner may mean much or little. There are some such biddings which are of the nature of those gold medals of honour conferred at Exhibitions, whereof advertising firms make capital so excusably; whereas others are the mere small coin or unconsidered counters of every-day social existence. To be chronicled in the *Morning Post* as a diner at Macbeth House is a valuable certificate for a young man who has his way to make in society or the professions. To be registered among the feasters at Mandeville House confers a certain celebrity, less solid, but more brilliant. To be the guest of such an entertainer as Sir Pagan Carew would, to the wary and veteran diner-out of London, have suggested nothing but the certainty of bad cookery and dubious vintages, and the still worse probability of making those queer acquaintances whom it is so proverbially difficult to cold-shoulder or to shake off. Yet Arthur Talbot went cheerfully enough to keep his appointment in Bruton Street. He knew the baronet, and liked him well, although there was a wide gulf, as to culture and tone of thought, between the two men. And then Sir Pagan was Clare's brother; albeit Clare herself was probably quite as much of an enigma to her kith and kin as she was becoming to himself. Could it be that prosperity and pomp, and splendour and power, were combining to spoil that fine nature, and that the delicate sweet young girl, who had grown up like a wild blossom amidst the dark Devon moors, was now becoming cold and egotistical in the proud solitude of her high position! He feared so; and yet—

Bruton Street at last; not that the way had seemed long to Arthur, wrapped in meditation as he was; and he laid his hand upon the rusty knocker and awoke the echoes within. A man, in shirt-sleeves and very hot, with a white cravat and black garments, but with 'greengrocer' plainly written on his ingenuous countenance,

came bustling to the door, and admitted the guest, with an air of manifest disappointment that he was not some emissary from florist or pastrycook. Another man, Sir Pagan's nondescript servitor in livery, more groom than footman, then appeared, hastily shaking himself into his bright-buttoned coat. The narrow hall was dimly lighted, and littered with trays and wine-baskets; and from the dining-room itself there came a portentous hum and clatter of preparation. Arthur was hurriedly ushered up the darkling staircase, and into the faded drawing-room, where the gas was blazing brightly enough. The room had only one occupant, a slender girl, dressed in black, who was arranging some fresh-cut flowers in a great porcelain vase that stood in the centre of an old-fashioned loo-table. She started, and turned round like a frightened fawn at the sound of the opening door and the muttered announcement of the visitor's name. There was no mistaking the beautiful young face, crowned by golden hair.

'Mr Talbot,' said the girl timidly, and then held out her hand in sign of greeting. She had let the tiny basket which she held drop upon the floor, and one or two of the blossoms and a tuft of moss were strewn over the carpet.

Arthur stooped to pick them up. 'I startled you, I fear,' he said, smiling. 'I am here by your brother's invitation; and from the terms of it, I did not expect'—

'To see me,' answered she to whom he spoke, as he hesitated. 'I suppose not; and I, too, was quite taken by surprise, though you are an old friend, Mr Talbot. This is one of Pagan's bachelor parties; and I was trying to be useful, and was afraid that, like Cinderella at the ball, I had overstayed my time, and that it was more than half-past eight, and my brother's guests arriving.'

'Mine was a verbal invitation—I thought it was for eight o'clock,' said Talbot, half amused and half annoyed at his own inadvertence, as he glanced at the gilt clock on the chimney-piece, of chipped but massive marble. 'I begin to see what a blunder I have made, and that I have come half an hour too soon. I only hope that you will forgive my rustic awkwardness, and not let me banish you from the drawing-room. It would be fitter if I, as the trespasser, were to take flight. Perhaps you will let me help you with the flowers, or, at anyrate hold the basket. I think I might be capable of that.'

His host's sister accepted his assistance readily enough, as, with patient care, she put the final touches to the arrangement of the flowers in the vase; but her face was averted, and her slender white fingers trembled very much, so that the process was a slow one. Arthur himself felt embarrassed at a meeting so wholly unexpected. How well, in Egypt, had he known the two sisters. Then, they had appeared all but inseparable; now something, he could not conjecture what, had occurred to occasion an estrangement between them. Talbot was far from grasping the key of the enigma. Lady Barbara's oracular utterances had implied that the blame for this sudden separation lay at the door of the sister now before him; but then, of what imaginable fault could she have been guilty? and was it possible that some feminine quarrel, some silly

ebullition of temper, had been misconstrued and magnified, perhaps by the injudicious partisanship of the dignified aunt of the late Marquis, and had thus brought about a severance between those who had seemed indissolubly united?

'I was at Leominster House yesterday,' said Arthur, who felt it incumbent on him to change the subject. 'I should not have called—not yet, at least; but Lady Barbara, who was most gracious, insisted on my doing so; and the Marchioness'—

As if a wasp had stung her, the girl started from him, and all the colour faded from her face, while her eyes dilated, and she gazed at him with a sort of horror that was to him perplexing and painful withal. 'You have been there—been to her?' she asked, as if incredulous.

'There must be some mistake,' said Talbot gently. 'I merely mentioned my visit, at Lady Barbara Montgomery's express wish, at Leominster House, and that the Marchioness, your sister'—

'The Marchioness!—my sister!' interrupted the girl, with a long quivering cry of anger.—'Is it possible—can it be, that you have not heard'—

'Heard what?' asked Talbot, with pitying softness in his tone, for he could mark her grief and agitation, while he could not, had his very life depended on it, divine its cause.

'I thought,' answered the girl piteously, 'that Pagan—that my brother would have told you—you and he are friends—so were we two, not long ago, in that country that now seems so far away. But he has, it seems, left it to me to tell you, if I can, the dreadful truth.—Mr Talbot,' she added, looking him full in the face, though her blue eyes swam with tears, and her voice was tremulous and broken, 'who am I? For whom do you take me?'

Never had Arthur been asked so bewildering a question. 'Really—Miss Carew,' he began; when his hesitating speech was interrupted by a passionate outburst of sobs, and, covering her face with her hands, his entertainer's sister rushed from the room, the quicker, perhaps, because at that moment there was the unmistakable sound of feet and voices on the staircase; and soon the door of the drawing-room was flung open, and 'Sir Thomas Jenks,' 'Captain Spurrier,' 'Mr Beamish,' were announced in rapid succession by the footman.

Three gentlemen came in. The first was old Sir Thomas Jenks—a very aged baronet, not too well off. Well-meaning, dull Sir Thomas had a wife and daughters at home, and was by far too domestic a character to be a frequent diner-out *en garçon*. But he had a high traditional regard for the decayed House of Carew, and would have felt a pang had he refused the invitation of his brother baronet.

Of a very different mould was gallant Captain Spurrier, once, in India and on the Afghan frontier, reputed a dashing officer of light cavalry, and who had only needed the opportunity of a protracted European war to win renown with his sword. As it was, he was out of the army long ago, and lived and won laurels such as they were, by risking his neck fearlessly on any horse a patron chose to offer, on any steeple-

chase course in all Europe. His new career was far more dangerous than his old one, since life and limb were perpetually in peril, and fraught with the temptations that beset the gentleman rider even more than the humbly-born jockey. But, 'as honest as Spurrier' was a proverb on the racecourse, and a good deal of his desperately won earnings found its way to a quiet villa on the seacoast near Whitby, where an old mother and two spinster sisters had much cause to pray for his life.

Of another mould, too, though a meaner one, was glib Mr Beamish, the rattling Irish barrister, whose two great ambitions were to win an English wife noble and well endowed, and a British borough, by the strength of his fluent tongue and facile gesticulation; and who really seemed, in an epoch like our own, when blatant charlatans find only too many ears open to their audacious assertions, likely to succeed in both of these modest aspirations. Envious Irishmen, lower down the ladder of social life, averred that 'Patsy Beamish's' father had been a waiter in a Cork hotel, and that 'Patsy' himself had been errand-boy, boots's deputy, and winner of other gossoms' halfpence at pitch-and-toss on the quays, long before his papa's savings sent him up to become a student of Trinity College and a bewigged ornament of the Irish bar. A clever fellow, unquestionably, and a rising man, as some newspapers protested, was Mr Beamish from Ireland.

Then came bursting in Sir Pagan, the host, hot and flustered, after his scamper home in a hansom, and his hurried toilet, apologising to his guests, individually, as he wrung their hands in turn, for his own non-appearance to receive them. 'So sorry, Sir Thomas—business engagement—hope I didn't keep you long.'—'Beg pardon, Mr Beamish; couldn't get away.'—'Talbot, you'll forgive my being so rude as'—'Sorry, Spurrier; but I was kept, ten miles from London, about a horse that Cockermouth—that fellow in the Lancers—wants to sell. He's a grand horse to look at.' These last sentences were uttered in a low and semi-confidential tone.

'Ah, a horse; did you buy him?' asked the Captain, puckering up his clear dark eyes, as was his wont when he scanned an ugly place in the fence towards which he was, professionally, riding hard in silken jacket. Never had he himself pocketed a wrongful sixpence; but he knew how slippery are the paths on which those who deal in horses, whether to buy, sell, or bet, must travel, and how hard it is to be concerned about those noble, all-enduring animals without degenerating into knave or dupe.

'No, I didn't,' retorted the baronet expressively, as if he had been saved from a great danger; and then he turned to welcome 'Mr Fulford,' 'Colonel Prideaux,' and one or two more honest Devon gentlemen, who had stretched a point to avail themselves of the invitation of a Carew of Carew. Then in came the two or three other guests, mere London diners-out, clubmen of no especial note; and then dinner was announced, and there was a shambling progress down-stairs, made especially awkward by old Sir Thomas Jenks, who, with his antiquated politeness, turned to apologise to his followers for preceding them down the narrow staircase, and caused more than

one clumsy stoppage before the banqueting hall was reached.

It was a bad dinner. It could scarcely be otherwise, given as it was in Bruton Street, by a bachelor baronet on the verge of bankruptcy, and whose straitened circumstances did not permit him to secure the services of that *rara avis* of domesticity, a good cook. Some of the battered old Carew plate had as yet escaped the melting-pot of the silversmith; and with the aid of fresh flowers and hothouse fruit, it made as brave a show as it could; but the waiting was bad, the made-dishes were as indigestible compounds as the perversity of a pastrycook could well contrive; and while some of the wine was good, much of it was execrable. Nor was the conversation such as might atone for the shortcomings of viands and vintages. Mr Beamish, with his oily Cork brogue and easy flow of words, took the lion's share in it; while the only other talker was Colonel Prideaux, who commanded a militia battalion somewhere in the western counties, and was more ostentatiously 'pipeclay' in his discourse than the smartest martinet in the regular army. Captain Spurrier, finding himself in uncongenial company, said very little. Sir Thomas, after a vain attempt to interest his neighbours at table in his usual topics, petty-sessions, poachers, and turnpike trusts, became as mute as a fish; and Sir Pagan, as a silent host, found himself unable to dispel the general dullness. He had never learned the truth, that dinner-giving is a branch of the fine arts, and that to assort the company is to the full as necessary to enjoyment as it is to provide for the commissariat. He was himself a shy, moody man, painfully conscious of his narrow education and scanty reading, and ill at ease when not among those of his own set. The giving of this particular dinner he looked upon as an act of duty, if not of actual penance, and was on thorns until the whole affair should be over, and he himself free to resume the interrupted thread of his habitual life.

One member of the party, Sir Pagan felt, had disappointed the hopes which his host had secretly entertained concerning his demeanour at the festive board. He had always had a high opinion of Arthur Talbot, not merely as an honourable gentleman, but as, what the sporting baronet admired as humbly as French warriors, when Louis XIV. was king, admired French wits—'a clever fellow.' He had looked on him as a counterpoise to Beamish the Corkagian barrister, whose too voluble discourse was unrelieved save by the didactic prosianness of the militia colonel; whereas Talbot, fresh from Egypt too, and with a memory presumably stored with travellers' tales, did not so much as enliven the dreariness by a single allusion to dragomans and dahabeahs, and contributed nothing more to the debate than did heavy Squire Fulford, whose thoughts were of oilcake and drain-tiles and shorthorns. The truth was, that Arthur's thoughts were far away from the immediate purpose of the social gathering. He was unconscious of the exceeding badness of the ill-cooked *entrées*; and as for the wine, it mattered little to him whether the sherry came from Hamburg or Cadiz, the champagne from Epernay or Cetté. Even the dozen or so of sound claret

that Sir Pagan had brought up reluctantly from his father's depleted cellar, did not, so far as his modest share of it went, make itself any more noticed by its velvet smoothness than did the acrid heat of the Elbe counterfeit of golden Amontillado. He cared nothing for the blatant talk and circuit jokes of the rising Irish barrister, and was not even aware how very stupid and wearisome the party was.

The truth was that Arthur Talbot now felt that a riddle which it might have puzzled Œdipus to solve, had suddenly been set before him. What was the real cause of the quarrel or the estrangement between those twin sisters, Clare and Cora, the one so highly placed in the world's hierarchy, the other as richly endowed, in spite of her poverty, with the gifts of nature's giving? He had seen enough of both—or thought he had—to feel convinced that their sisterly love for one another was no mere thing of habit, and that it must have taken some deep-lying motive, some violent wrench, to bring about the scandal of the separation. He had seen but yesterday the one sister in the solemn stateliness of her late husband's home. That evening he had spoken with the other beneath her brother's roof. Each had received him with embarrassed coldness. Each had seemed to be smarting under some sense of undeserved wrong. What was it that had befallen both? The utterances which he had heard had been so enigmatical that they obscured rather than enlightened his intelligence. It is not surprising that he was reckoned as among the dummies of the party.

The dinner was over at last; and coffee and cigars and curaçoa and other liqueurs, from which Sir Thomas Jenks, heedful of the warnings of his doctor, recoiled as from a rattlesnake, being slowly disposed of; and this not being one of those repasts that are followed by card-playing as surely as the thunder-roll succeeds to the lurid glare of the lightning, it came to be time to say 'good-night.' Highly respectable Sir Thomas was the first to take a ceremonious leave of the wearied host, and his example was eagerly imitated by the other banqueters. Arthur Talbot, who had been the first to come, was in effect the last to go; and he lingered, half unconscious of his motive, in the vague hope that Sir Pagan might say something to elucidate the mystery that brooded over the present relations of the two sisters. But nothing was farther from Sir Pagan's thoughts.

'Awfully kind of you to come, Talbot, at such short notice,' said the baronet, looking ruefully around him, and surveying, with a sort of ingenuous disgust, the ruins of the feast, in the shape of cigar-ends, glasses huddled together, and dessert dishes in confusion. 'And a dreadful bore, I should think, you found it, old man. I know I did! Thought it would never be over. The fact is, dear boy, I'm not the man to do this sort of thing, any more than I am to be Lord Chamberlain or Astronomer-royal. At the club, it's different.—Light another cigar?—No!—Then good-night.'

And so they parted; Arthur walking home to his hotel, chewing the cud of his own involved thoughts. And at last sleep came to him, and he dreamed that he was in Egypt again, the old Egypt, not the new, one of a trembling

crowd gathered around the awful beauty of the colossal Sphinx, and in the stern, solemn face, as it turned towards him with inscrutable eyes, he recognised the features of Madame de Lalouve.

THE DRAMA IN TATTERS.

To begin at the beginning, is an axiom of mine which I am never tired of repeating; and why should I not, in mentioning the theatricals of to-day, begin with the 'gaff!'—Anglicè, penny theatre, that time-honoured institution which was at once the solace and amusement of my boyish days—for the enjoyment of which I have frequently sacrificed the gross amount of the last 'tip.' Of course, my frequent visits to the 'Temple of Variety' were made in secret, an additional ingredient to the stolen delights. To preserve my credit as a faithful chronicler, I must admit that the entrances to these temporary 'abodes of bliss' were almost invariably up a court or at the end of a yard, in the innermost recesses of which, adjoining a gaping entry, a long bill and a strong bill—painted by hand in all the colours of the rainbow—was exhibited.

Gifted with the wisdom of the serpent, the lessee of the show spared no pains to coerce the nimble penny. The performances were pronounced to be unique, and notes of admiration were typographically scattered in every available space. The most important item was of course the announcement of the title of the play for the evening. For be it known that the proprietor of the 'Temple'—the which particular establishment I have now under notice—was a most liberal man, at least as far as 'bold advertisement' doth go. He gave us an entire change of performance every evening, and assumed, moreover, the office of 'guide, philosopher, and friend,' by investing with a distinctive epithet the name of each actor and actress in the programme, as 'the bold,' 'the comic,' 'the pert,' 'the lovely.' Now, as the company numbered only six persons—four males and two females—this perhaps was no difficult matter, and may be regarded as superfluous; still, it saved the audience a world of trouble. You were not called upon to investigate or criticise the conduct of the entertainment, but, like the clay in the potter's hand, you were moulded into the proper form ere you were consigned to the oven above. I use the word 'oven' advisedly, for when packed to repletion—as frequently happened—it was hot! 'To conclude with a Comic Song! Admission One Penny!! Vivat Regina!!!' in capitals three inches high.

That delicious touch of 'Vivat Regina!' Every reader of the flaming placard repeated the words; but no one ever attempted an interpretation of them. The nightly bill of fare was subject to continual alterations, but we kept our 'Vivat Regina' to the last. I have endeavoured thus far to present the reader with an accurate account of the condition of things on the outside of the 'Temple.' We will now, if you please, step within.

Having contributed the necessary admission fee to a gentleman at the door, who is balancing himself on a wooden leg, we go up a flight of very steep steps, at the top of which we encounter another gentleman, known by the name of

'Fishy,' from his presumed avocation as a retail dealer in the finny tribe. You could scent him a long while before you saw him. In spite, however, of this drawback, he was a general favourite with the frequenters, from his kindly manner and genial flow of humour. Passing through the folds of a remnant of old sailcloth, I find myself in the corner of a large loft—partly covering a row of stables—stables unmistakably, from the occasional clamps of tired horses, and the fragrant odour which proceeds therefrom—a little below the level of the footlights, and on the far side of the stage. There are no reserved seats whatever. From the raised platform to the outer walls are a number of rough planks ranged longitudinally, rising one above another as in an ordinary gallery. In the topmost corner on the right hand is a small inclosure with a counter, devoted to the sale of 'oranges, apples, and ginger-beer.'

The arrangements behind the curtain are primitive and simple: there are four tolerably well-painted scenes slung upon rollers, comprising an exterior, an interior, a wood, and a street. The brickwork at the back of the stage is coloured to represent a landscape. Wings there are none; but the proscenium—three feet wide on each side—being fixed parallel with the seats, offers some slight protection to the actors in their entrances and exits. The musical element was sparsely represented; one instrument only—a violin—constituted the entire orchestra. Gas, of course, was unavailable, and candles were too insignificant; the authorities therefore resorted to the use of a fearful compound of grease and oil, the fumes of which were suffocating. Five pans, in shape like huge garden saucers, were filled with this precious liquid, and placed at intervals along the edge of the platform, to do duty as 'floats.' Sometimes the business of the drama required a night effect; this was managed by means of a long slip of deal, fastened to the stage by hinges, but lying flat thereon, until the appearance of the bloodstained spectre or the pallid ghost called for darkness, when, by the aid of a cord attached to each end, it was raised, and the necessary result followed.

It should be mentioned that there are three 'houses' or performances nightly, each of which lasts about an hour. The reader is supposed to be present at the first of these, say at seven o'clock. By this time the audience has increased in number to at least three hundred, and the noise they make is deafening. 'Stop it, old catgut!' 'Pull up the rag!' 'Now then, look alive!' &c. Before the curtain rises, however, it may be as well to mention a little peculiarity attaching to the dramas enacted here. To-night we are to have *The Highland Cateran*; to-morrow, perhaps *The Outlaw*; and the night following, *The Freebooter*. Thus with variations—harping on the same old string—we at last arrive at *Kob Roy*! so that in reality the 'change every evening' is a delusion and a snare. The bell rings. 'Order, order, or-der!' is vociferated loudly as the curtain rises, and we are supposed to be transported to Bonnie Scotland. The prison scene in the Tolbooth is represented by a cottage interior. Instead of the 'practicable' door hung with chains, we have a latticed window liberally garnished with flowering shrubs.

The Cateran enters, followed by the Bailie. The 'bold' hero (*vide bill*) is dressed oddly enough—his head-covering is a faint copy of the time-honoured billycock; and his garments are a modern suit of fustian much dilapidated; whilst about his legs curl wisps of straw, and he walks with a slouch. Taken altogether, his appearance suggests the idea of a cross between a dog-fancier and a scavenger. He speaks. Such a voice! Shades of James Prescott Warde and Thomas Archer, could it have been possible for you to have revisited the glimpses of the moon, your immaterial shadows must have shivered in dismay—tones deep as the funeral bell of old St Paul's; or recalling, it may be, the angry boom of the lingering thunder as it rolls about the heads of the eternal hills. Still, putting aside the incongruous costume, there was stuff in the man. He did not 'mouth' the part, as my poor old friend Jack M— was wont to do that of Rashleigh, but treated the matter tenderly, as though he loved it. Strange to relate, I met this same individual, twenty years after the above performance, in a small printing office in the City, 'composing-stick' in hand. The calling had changed in the interval, but the well-remembered voice was as full and as resonant as ever.

Billy W—, the renowned 'Comic,' was an immense favourite; nothing he could do, or did, came amiss to us; but I doubt if his conception of the part of the Bailie would have been greeted with so many signs of approval, had our knowledge of the original been more familiar. The dialect was dropped altogether, and the canny Glasgow weaver himself so transformed, that his most intimate friends would have failed to recognise him. The curiosities of costume were never better exemplified or more fully developed than by Billy on this occasion. All the merit attaching to originality was his. His personal decorations were as florid as they were inaccurate. A fore-and-aft cocked-hat and feather, surmounted the most whimsical face you ever saw; an old bob-tailed militia coat, decorated on one arm with three good-conduct stripes, was closely buttoned at the chin; but being a world too small in the region of the chest, the aid of a belt was requisitioned, one of those so much affected by the stage British tar—a broad, black, leathern band, with a huge brass buckle. His nether limbs were clad in corduroy shorts, supplemented by a pair of wellingtons. Anything more ludicrous cannot well be conceived. But the crowning point is not yet reached. In the scene where Helen receives tidings of the capture of the Chief—the news being brought by Rashleigh in the disguise of a gillie—and the 'Lament' is raised, he gave vent to his grief by trolling forth the rollicking popular ditty of *All round my hat!*

My impression was—and it remains to this day—that the before-mentioned Jack M—, on being cast for the part of Rashleigh, determined to make it the most prominent in the piece; and he did! Dressed in the costume usually worn by the third robber in the *Miller and his Men*, he looked superb, and his shouting was terrific. But his grand *coup* was to be brought about later on, as we shall see.

The fourth and last remaining male member of the company, Mr Herbert Montague, deserves honourable mention, not perhaps on account

of any extraordinary aptitude he displayed, but for the profound mystery which surrounded him. Nobody seemed to know precisely who or what he was. His appearance was eminently prepossessing. Tall and well made, he carried with him the air of a gentleman. He certainly claimed no parentage in the salubrious neighbourhood of the Lower Marsh. That he lived 'over the water' was strongly inferred from the fact of his having been met on one occasion crossing Waterloo Bridge in a cab. It therefore naturally occurred to us *habitues* that he was connected in some remote way with the titled aristocracy at the West End; but as no evidence in corroboration of this popular belief was ever forthcoming, it is just possible there was no truth in it. Anyway, the fact remains that he was always better clothed, both on and off the stage, than his fellows; that he never appeared to be without money—this was a most remarkable feature; and that, moreover, our surly doorkeeper—he of the wooden leg—always touched the rim of his broken beaver in deference, whenever he passed in or out. Mr Herbert Montague—there was a flavour of the 'upper ten' even in the name—who 'doubled' the parts of Francis and Captain Thornton, was not as yet in possession of the powers of a Macready or a Kean; indeed, to put it mildly, he could not act at all; yet was there a certain propriety in the delivery of the words set down for him; beyond that, an innate love of the truth bids me avow that he was a stick, a stick of sticks!

Like a provident housewife, who, careful of her store of newly gathered fruit, carefully selects those that are damaged from others that remain unbruised, so I, having disposed of and set aside the inferior article, come now to discuss the merits of the choicest and best! Our leading lady was a very fair actress indeed, shining particularly in pathetic parts. She endeavoured to make every character she undertook fall into the tearful groove, had the 'melting mood' ready at the slightest hint, and sometimes without. But perhaps the most singular thing in connection with this lachrymose obligato was this—the fits of emotion, however prolonged and powerful, never affected the audience in a sympathetic sense. Not that we were insensible to the due presentment of sorrow or pain; no, far from that; I fancy that most of us had been life-long companions with these, in addition to cold and hunger; the secret of our apparent want of feeling arose not from callousness, be it observed, but through the too profound contemplation of the eccentricities of a 'swivel' eye! the owner of which was the wife of the Macgregor. In the lighter or more level passages, this defect was not so prominent, and but for a latent sense of its utter incongruity, would have raised a laugh; but when, in the more vehement parts, her excitement increased, the visual organ grew so restless and so fearfully 'swivelly,' that we were reduced to a state of coma, quite subversive of anything like applause.

Last, 'though not least in our dear love,' comes pretty Mary L—, the pert soubrette; in private life the wife of our leading man, and the mother of three little ones. In those early days, I pictured to myself no fairer form of female beauty. As bright and as lively as a spring

morning, she never approached the front without a welcome from our ready hands, whilst her cheerful laughter-loving face set us all aglow with merriment. As Di Vernon and Hamish, there was small opportunity for the display of her peculiar talent; but her mere presence seemed to add a beauty to the scene which it had lacked before. With true womanly tact, she treated us always as children, as indeed we were, never soiling her sweet lips with a double-meaning or a cant phrase. No matter how noisily her companions were occasionally greeted, she was always received with the utmost sobriety and respect; indeed, we looked up to her as something better than ourselves. If there was anything like an approach to an uproar, it was instantly quelled by an entreating word from her, and sometimes she would promise us a song if we were 'good!' Unbearded and untaught as we were, without the slightest hint of that technical knowledge which comprises a musical education, we testified our delight at this announcement by repeated shouts and bravos. Of Jenny Lind, who just at this time had reached the zenith of her fame, we knew nothing except by report; but we had our own private opinions as to whether our dear favourite could not, if opportunity offered, speedily take the shine out of her.

The drama concluded, Mary would come to the front, accompanied by a few premonitory bars of the air—from the violin—with which she was about to favour us. I fancy that her *répertoire* was limited to two songs, perhaps because I never heard her sing any others; but they were gems of the purest water: *Home, sweet Home*, and *Wapping Old Stairs*. Altogether without artistic training, the little woman would achieve a positive triumph in the rendering of these plaintive melodies. The tender and expressive tone with which she uttered the word 'Home' invested it with a new meaning, so exquisitely touching, that the tears would fall unawares, and transform our sadness into a sweet sorrow.

Now that I have advertised you of the strong points and failings of our very select histrionic troupe, we will, if you please, revert to the closing scene of the drama. 'From information received,' we had learned that the hero had fallen into the hands of the ruthless Saxon, and that the worst was anticipated—hence the 'Lament.' At the conclusion of Billy W—'s well-chosen and appropriate ballad, we were suddenly surprised by a loud cry of 'Gregarach!' as the escaped Outlaw bounds upon the stage armed with one of those short basket-hilted swords, so precious, and so well remembered by the transpontine youth of fifty years ago. Rashleigh, who stands at the opposite corner, defiant and determined, is armed with a similar weapon. He knows perfectly well that the hunted Highlander has 'come' for him, and although his foot is not upon his native heath, he evidently means to do or die. The stage has been cleared to the bare wall at the back, and all superfluous articles of dress removed; and the combatants proceed to business in the most leisurely manner, keeping time and step to the tune of *Lodoiska*. This is Jack M—'s grand opportunity. If in the very nature of things theatric, he cannot be the leading man, he will at least retaliate by being to that exalted individual a terror and a punishment

to the bitter end. He scowls, he storms; the mimic battle assumes a terrific character; the flashing blades quiver in the murky gleam of the grease-pots, as the deadly combatants chase each other round and round to the hurried notes of the instrument. Jack lashes himself into a state of furious excitement dreadful to behold, as he aims a tremendous blow at his opponent's head; this the picturesque Scot avoids by stepping aside, while at the same instant he passes his sword up to the hilt below the uplifted arm of his antagonist. Under ordinary circumstances, this thrust would have been sufficient to give the quietus to 'any man of woman born.' Not so with Rashleigh; he, like the proverbial Englishman, did not know when he was beaten; he merely gasped a mighty 'Oh!' and staggered to the wall, waiting events.

It was very clear to me that if the Cateran did not quickly dispose of his enemy, the violent exercise necessarily entailed in the accomplishment of that desirable object would be too much for him. A truce, therefore, was tacitly agreed upon until sufficient breath should be recovered to continue the fight. They glared at each other from opposite corners. Jack's contortions, owing to the wound he had received, were terrible to witness. We incline to the belief that it would be a mercy to finish him out-of-hand, and so end his sufferings. But it is not to be—yet. Ossa must be piled upon Pelion. The Mac, I could plainly see, was sick and tired of the whole thing; he knew that this exhilarating amusement would have to be repeated three times during the night, and he wanted to get off and rest. You see 'Jack's delight' was Mac's pain, and Jack knew it! The stage was in his possession now. Was he to forego some of his finest efforts because Rob, forsooth, was not so strong in the arm as he was? The fates forbid!

During this short interval, Jack had managed by some occult means to whiten his face and place thereon some additional marks of the bloody fray. Once more do the combatants approach each other. Jack, through sheer weakness, falls on one knee, looking as vicious as a wounded rat. Slow music. Rob, in whose breast a wealth of manliness lies hidden, disdaining to take a mean advantage of a fallen foe, descends to the same level. The contest now continues languidly for a minute or two in this position—each on one knee. Vociferous applause shakes the roof-tree as Jack, with quickened energies, makes a superhuman effort to rise to his feet. This movement he accomplishes after a severe struggle. Standing erect, he shouts 'Come on!' This invitation is responded to with alacrity by the Macgregor, who 'comes on' with vigour, and at once, without more ado, tenders him another stab, which apparently goes clean through his body, as we descrie the end of the blade at his back. This thrust so deftly given settles our friend's little business for a period, and he falls prone upon his face in the centre of the stage. The remainder of the characters, male and female, now enter from each side; and the entire scene is glorified by a blaze of red-fire as the curtain descends slowly to the tuneful melody of *Auld Langsyne*. Jack is 'called' to receive the unanimous plaudits of the entire house; these he

accepts with a ghastly smile as the hero of the evening, and retires to enjoy a whiff of the fragrant weed and a draught of beer.

Thus ends a chronicle of the Drama in Tatters.

OUR NEW MANAGER.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

A SHORT half-hour's walk from Sandsmouth—a large seaport on the southern English coast—lies the secluded village of Bithfield. It is but a small place, and may fairly be described as secluded; for although so near a large town, yet lying on a cross-road between two other roads—which themselves were never of great importance, and are now shorn even of that by the railways—Bithfield seems to have grown lonelier and quieter than ever.

A little outside of the village, and between it and the town, stood Fernlow Cottage, the residence of Mrs Vallens. This at least was the title by which she was known to the few persons—her tradesmen chiefly—who had occasion to speak of her; but it was given principally on account of her mature age, for she was past middle life; and as a sort of compliment, rather than as implying the existence, past or present, of a Mr Vallens. She lived a retired, solitary life, and was so reserved in her manner as to repel the few residents of Bithfield who had sought her acquaintance. So reserved was she, that no foot save that of her own servants crossed her threshold month after month; but at the opening of our story, an incident occurred which changed this monotony in some degree.

When Mrs Vallens walked out, she usually selected the least-frequented paths; and with her deep double veil screening her face, her features were almost invisible to the few persons whom she encountered. One afternoon she was following a bypath which led across some fields to a farmhouse and cottages, when she came suddenly upon a spectacle which startled her. At the foot of a large tree knelt a girl of some eighteen or nineteen years, supporting a boy, a mere child, clad in the commonest rustic garb of the neighbourhood. He was evidently insensible; and as the dress of the girl was stained with blood, and the face of the boy was also marked, it was clear that he had received some injury.

The girl was holding a small scent-bottle to his nostrils, and on hearing a step, looked up. 'Oh, I am so glad some one has come!' she exclaimed. 'I saw this poor little fellow fall from this tree; and when I came up, his forehead was covered with blood, and he was quite senseless. What can we do?'

The mysterious lady of Fernlow Cottage immediately dropped on one knee by the side of the nurse and her patient; then with dexterous and gentle touch, examined into the injuries the boy had sustained. 'He is not very seriously hurt, I think,' she said; 'and if you will hold him until I bring some water—there is a spring just here—he will recover.—You are not afraid?'

'N—no,' said the girl. 'It is very dreadful

to look at all this blood, and to see him looking like death; but I will hold him.'

Without another word, the elder lady disappeared, but returned almost immediately with her bonnet filled with water—greatly to the younger lady's horror; for she, after the manner of her sex, had noted the costly materials of which the article was composed. The water was sprinkled over the boy's face. He almost immediately sighed and opened his eyes. The elder lady drew out her handkerchief, with which she bathed his brow and washed away the clotted blood, then bound it carefully round an ugly cut which this process had rendered plainly visible.

By this time the lad could speak; then with an effort he stood upright, and was able to explain that he lived in one of the cottages by the farmhouse; that he had been bird-nesting. The rest the ladies knew more about than himself. By their assistance, the lad was enabled to walk slowly towards the farmhouse, until the party met a labourer who knew him, and kindly took him in charge.

Relieved of this care, the younger nurse had an opportunity to contemplate and bewail the really unsightly blotches on her light-coloured dress; the beholding of which, or the reaction natural after her excitement, affected her to tears, which had in them a strong suspicion of hysterics.

'Come to my house, my dear child,' said Mrs Vallens, speaking with a softness and tenderness for which few of her neighbours would have given her credit. 'It is close by; and as I must send a servant into the town to ask Dr Wright to come out to the farm and see the boy, she shall call upon your friends and bring another dress for you; or I can lend you one; whichever you please.'

'But your bonnet is spoiled,' said the girl, through her tears; 'and such a beautiful bonnet too!' Then remembering that a question had been asked or implied, continued: 'I should feel glad if you could send word; and yet it would frighten my mother so much! No; I had better go home. I live in Bithfield, in the Lower Down Road; my name is Darnett—Marian Darnett, and'—

'I know you, Miss Darnett,' interrupted her companion with a quiet smile; 'although you perhaps do not know me; and as we are now close to my house, we had better go in and decide upon our plans.'

This was the beginning of an intimacy between the recluse proprietress of Fernlow Cottage and Miss Marian Darnett, two beings as opposite in their appearance and, one would have supposed, in their tastes as could easily be found. For Marian was rather shy and timid, yet frank and cheerful withal. She had heard too, by local gossip, of Mrs Vallens, and held her in the same dislike, almost dread, as did most of her neighbours. She found, however, that while Mrs Vallens still held the same repellent front to all others, she was so kind and gentle to her, and welcomed her so cheerfully to her home—though never could she be induced to return the visit—that Marian felt sure she had been secretly pining for companionship, and was thankful for the chance which threw them together.

Solitary and secluded as had been her residence at Fernlow Cottage, Mrs Vallens must have exercised the proverbial quickness and closeness of a woman's observation; for Marian soon found—greatly to her confusion at first—that this lady was fully acquainted with her intimacy with a certain good-looking young fellow, Phil Hartleby, a clerk in the shipping and general mercantile firm of More, Keelby, & Co., one of the principal houses in Sandsmouth. When Mrs Vallens had shown how far her knowledge extended, and her kindly manner had won Marian's confidence, she was evidently pleased to lead the latter to speak freely and to receive the little confidences the girl had to impart.

Having commenced our story as it were in the middle, we are debarred from making the usual detailed explanations in regard to the positions and antecedents of our characters; for this the reader should be thankful. We shall merely say, in reference to Marian's friends, that they were in a respectable although not extensive way of business in the town, living, as being cheaper and pleasanter, in the suburbs. Of Mr Philip Hartleby, Mrs Vallens had a pretty accurate knowledge. He was the son of a surgeon who had owned one of the best practices in Sandsmouth; but he—the surgeon—was an easy-going, careless fellow, clever enough in his profession, but not in much else besides; so, when he died, at the age of forty or so, his only son found himself with no profession and no property. He was, however, a clever, energetic young fellow, by no means disposed to eat the bread of idleness. Having, by the help of friends, obtained a clerkship in the house of More, Keelby, & Co., he worked with such a will, that he soon obtained promotion, and was now looked upon as the most rising man in the establishment.

The proprietress of Fernlow Cottage encouraged Marian to speak of the young man, and took pleasure in her little history. Prosaic and commonplace as such a history would have seemed to many, yet there is a halo of romance inseparable from the plainest love-story, which is dear to woman, even when she is reserved and hermit-like, as was Mrs Vallens. Not that Marian would now ever allow that there was anything in the least degree harsh or repellent in the temperament of her new friend. It was only manner, the young lady contended—the effect, she was certain, of some early sorrow. Perhaps, Marian used to think, and sometimes say to Philip, perhaps she had once loved as they loved, and had been less happy; thus, in her turn, weaving something of romance about the lady.

One evening, some months after the incidents just related, when spring had grown to summer, and summer was fading into autumn, Phil Hartleby called at Mr Darnett's house, in the Lower Down Road. This was no unusual circumstance with him; but on this particular evening he was to take Marian to a schoolroom hard by, where was to be held a rehearsal for a certain local concert, at which the young lady was to sing. She had a voice at once sweet and powerful, and which had been well trained. Although she made no claim to be a finished vocalist of the operatic pattern, nevertheless in ballads and songs she was very attractive; and as it turned out, this concert became something like a turning-

point in her hitherto quiet and unobtrusive life.

On this night, too, Phil was full of news; the changes which had been spoken of so long in the great house of More, Keelby, & Co. had at last taken place; the style of the firm would be preserved as hitherto, but old Mr More would retire, and a new partner would come in—had come in, he understood. This was Mr Pike, a gentleman of immense capital, and still more immense business capacity and energy; so Phil was informed. He was to be the managing partner; the ruling spirit; everything, in fact; and under his sway, the firm might possibly grow to tenfold its present extent. Then, when Marian was walking by his side to the rehearsal, Phil added a fancy sketch to these particulars, which he had not deemed necessary to draw before the family circle. This sketch had reference to the wider field opened to the staff of the firm by the change; their bettered positions; their early, and of course always happy marriages, and the possibility of some one of the number being selected to take charge of the accounts at the London branch of the house. If this were so, the delights of living in the metropolis might fall to the lot of Mr Phil Hartleby, and his wife—that would be; and they, like all residents in the provinces, thought of London very much as we are told their predecessors thought of it in Whittington's time.

Much of the information, apart from this sketch, which, as we have explained, was reserved for a select listener, was earnestly discussed by Mr Darnett, to whom it was as interesting as to Philip himself, as the former did what was, for him, a large business with the firm, and it was of importance that he should know whether certain facilities for transacting this business would be increased or diminished by the change. Philip took a very sanguine view, basing his conclusions upon the character which had preceded the new partner, who was said to have no old-fashioned notions which would cramp and restrict the business, such as Mr More sometimes laboured under. No; he was one who liked the customers to 'go ahead'; the faster and farther the better. These were evidently agreeable tidings to Mr Darnett, and he was as thoroughly prepared as Philip himself to rejoice in the coming of Mr Pike.

Both before and after the rehearsal, which was but of short duration, this kind of conversation prevailed, and Philip having seen Marian to her father's house, left in even higher spirits than he came, at the prospect which the advent of the new partner opened to himself and his friends.

Phil's home was in Sandsmouth; and as he entered a suburb of the town, he heard the sound of angry voices, and, turning a sharp angle of the road, came in sight of the speakers. A gentleman on horseback was engaged in altercation with a man at the roadside; the latter was holding some object in his arms; in the darkness, Philip could not at first accurately make out what this was. Two or three men from a neighbouring beerhouse had come out at the sound of the voices, and stood looking on and smoking, with but a languid interest, as no chance of a personal conflict seemed likely to be evolved.

The man on the footpath was a low-looking, shabbily dressed fellow, not of the rustic or labouring type, but rather of the 'flash' townsman order, being indeed just the man upon whom a police officer's eyes would turn by instinct.

'That's a lie, and you know it,' he said bitterly, in continuation of some earlier argument. 'The dog was trying to get out of your way, till you hit him with your whip and drove the poor brute under your horse's feet. I wish I had you off your horse out on the Downs here, I would give you something to remember him by.'

'Why, I have seen you before!' exclaimed the gentleman. 'Now you move into the light, I recollect you.' The man shrank back a pace or two here, so as to avoid the rays of a gaslight which shone from the neighbouring beerhouse. 'Oh! you need not slink back,' continued the horseman; 'I know you! I saw you on the racecourse yesterday. You are a thimble-rigger; a three-card man; and a pickpocket into the bargain, I have no doubt. If I could see the police sergeant now, I would have you locked up at once.'

A murmur from the lookers-on implied that this was not fair fighting, and had nothing to do with the points under discussion.

'Look here, sir,' said the man, encouraged probably by this token of sympathy, and turning to Philip as the most important member of his audience; 'you see this poor dog'—he opened his arms as he spoke, and showed that what he held was a little brown dog; dying or dead, so Philip judged from the helpless manner in which it was lying.

'Poor fellow!' said Phil, in the pitying tone one instinctively falls into on seeing a suffering dumb animal.

'Are you one of the gang?' demanded the rider, who was clearly not distinguished for good temper.

Phil looked rather angrily up at the speaker, and met his eye. He was a man of middle age, dark complexion, and with remarkably glossy whiskers, while his eyes were keen unfeeling eyes—so thought Phil, as he noted them in a single glance by the gaslight. 'I know no more of a gang than yourself,' retorted Phil. 'I am only sorry to see the poor little dog in such a state. The man seems fond of him, and you cannot wonder if he feels its loss.'

'He should feel something else, if I had my will,' returned the horseman; 'and if you are not one of the gang, you had better be careful how you pick your companions, for if I meet a policeman, I will come back with him; so you had better clear off.' With this he put spurs to his horse and was out of sight directly.

'What made him so terribly out of temper with you?' said Phil. 'Had you had much of a quarrel before I came up?'

'Yes; we just about did have a row,' said the man. 'He killed poor Tiny, and he did it on purpose. If we had been in a quieter place, out on the Downs, for instance, I would have put him'—The man did not finish his sentence.

'What made him say you were a cardsharp and so on?' asked Phil, who regretted the indiscreet question the moment he had asked it.

'What made him say it?' echoed the man.

'Why, because I *am* one, that's why. I have been working the race-meeting down here, but with bitter bad luck. I have tried the cards; I have tried the purse-trick; I have tried all I know, but couldn't draw a coin from the stingy chawbacons about here. I lost every shilling I put on the horses; and now me and Tiny was on the tramp; and this pipe of tobacco what I was smoking was the last I had got, and neither me nor Tiny knew where to get our supper to-night nor our breakfast in the morning. But we had been in such a fix before this; and I would have gone without a meal for myself—and have done it, mister—before Tiny should have gone without his; and now he's dead. I always had a friend while he was alive, and now'—The tramp, for such he clearly was, faltered in his speech here, and under pretence of pushing back his ragged hair, Philip saw him draw the cuff of his sleeve across his eyes.

The young man hesitated a moment, then drawing half-a-crown from his pocket, offered it to the other. 'This is not a great deal,' said Phil; 'but it will help you to get a lodging for to-night, and to-morrow something may turn up.'

'Well!' exclaimed the tramp, after a pause of astonishment; 'I didn't expect this, mister—I didn't indeed. I'm very much obliged to you for it; but if you think I was working the oracle for this, in telling you what I did, I'm blessed if I want it. I don't, really. Sleeping in a barn is nothing fresh to me; and I shouldn't like you to think, though I am a thimble-rigger, that'—

'O nonsense!' said Phil; 'I give it to you for poor Tiny's sake. I am fond of dogs myself, so I quite understand your sorrow at his death.'

'Thank you, mister; I thank you kindly for this half-crown,' said the man. 'But though you've got a feeling heart, you can't understand what I feel at losing this dumb creature. But if ever I get a chance of squaring it with that fellow'—

'Come! don't talk such dangerous nonsense,' said Phil. 'I daresay he has forgotten all about you by this time; at anyrate he did not come back with the police. You know you ought not to talk like that.'

'He's a bad one—a rank bad one, spite of his horse and his swell clothes,' retorted the other; 'and always was.'

'Always was!' repeated Phil. 'Have you ever seen him before?'

The man looked at Phil with a curious smile before replying, then said: 'Did you see me move out of the light when he said he knew me?—You did. Well, I didn't want him to recollect too much. Praps he did see me on the racecourse; for, I tell you freely, I have been there with the cards; but praps he did not. It's just as likely he only thought he did. Directly I spoke to him and told him my opinion, before you was there, you know, I saw a look come upon his face, as if he was trying to recall something he had seen or heard a good while ago.'

'Well, good-night,' said Phil; 'I wish you better luck and a better trade. Get out of Sandsmouth anyhow.'

'Good-night, mister, and good-luck to you,' said the tramp. 'As to my trade, it's pretty near all that is left to me. I think I saw you in a certain warehouse to-day; and if I am right, you will find there are people in other trades quite as bad as me. But you've got a kind heart, mister; and if ever I can do you a good turn, I will.' And with this, they parted.

A CHINESE FUNERAL.

I was disturbed one day during my mid-day meal at Hong-kong by a commotion in a street adjoining the one in which I was residing, caused by a Chinese funeral of more than the usual pretensions. As very little is known among foreigners, even those residing in China, in regard to 'celestial' obsequies and their meanings, I took some trouble to gather information regarding the strange pageantry which I that day witnessed.

It is the general custom in China, when a man is about to die, for the eldest son to remove him from the bed to the floor of the principal room of the house, where he is laid with his feet to the door. The inhabitants of the province of Fuh-kien are in the habit of placing a piece of silver in the mouth of the dying person—with which he may pay his fare into the next world—and carefully stopping up his nose and ears. In certain cases they make a hole in the roof, to facilitate the exit of the spirits proceeding from his body; their belief being that each person possesses seven animal senses, which die with him; and three souls, one of which enters Elysium and receives judgment; another abides with the tablet which is prepared to commemorate the deceased; and the third dwells in his tomb.

Whether all these practices are observed in Hong-kong, I am unable to say; probably the setting open of the windows and doors is regarded as a preferable proceeding to making a hole in the roof, more especially when the death happens to occur in the lowest room of a three-storied house. Here, however, as elsewhere, the intelligence of the death of the head of a family is communicated as speedily as possible to all his relatives, and the household is dressed in white—the mourning colour of China. Priests and women hired to mourn are sent for at the same time; and on their arrival, a table is set out with meats, fruits, lighted candles and joss-sticks, for the delectation of the souls of the deceased; and the wailing and weeping by the mourning-women is relieved at intervals by the intoned prayers of the priest or the discordant 'tom-tomming' of 'musicians' who have also been called to assist in the ceremonies. The women weep and lament with an energy and dolefulness which, if genuine, would be highly commendable; but ungenerous 'barbarians' of extensive acquaintance with the Chinese assert that this apparently overwhelming grief is, at least in the majority of cases, mere sham. In regard to the nearest relatives of the deceased, it would be uncharitable to presume there is not a considerable amount of real grief beneath all this weeping and wailing; but hired mourners, who are usually the most demonstrative on these occasions, can hardly be expected to launch every

other day into convulsive lamentations of a genuine nature over the death of individuals they hardly know by name. As it is, the priest usually directs these emotional demonstrations much in the same way as a conductor controls the performance of a band of musicians: now there are a few irregular wails; then a burst of them, relieved in turn by a few nasal notes from the priest, the intervals being filled up by the 'tom-toms,' and an occasional titter from the latest comers.

One of the strangest features in the obsequies I witnessed was the erection of a structure in front of the house in which the death occurred, to enable the coffined body to be brought down to the roadway from the room in which it was lying. The house being a three-storied one, and the body lying in one of the topmost rooms, the erection, which furnished a sloping footway of planks from the room to the road, and a landing at the top, had necessarily not only to be lofty but substantial. Communication was of course had with the room through the window. These structures are, I believe, erected for two reasons—first, because strange families in a house object, on superstitious grounds, to a corpse being taken through their rooms; and secondly, because it is almost impracticable to get a heavy Chinese coffin down the narrow tortuous stairs of many of the native houses. For a similar reason, no body in course of transportation from one part of China to another for the purpose of interment is allowed to pass through any walled town. No corpse, either, is ever allowed to be carried across a landing-place or to pass through a gateway which can in any way be construed as pertaining to the Emperor. The Chinese are indeed so superstitious in regard to death as seldom to mention that word itself, preferring to take refuge in a circumlocution, such, for instance, as 'having become immortal.'

What may be particularised as the public obsequies of the deceased, on the special occasion I refer to, were commenced by a procession issuing from the house on the mission known as 'buying the water' wherewith to wash the body of the deceased. First came the 'musicians' (save the word); then a priest, wearing a long robe of a dark-red colour and a sort of college cap; and lastly, the white-clad mourners. On the mainland, the procession would probably have repaired to the nearest river, well, or even the wet ditch of the city, for the water; but these antiquated conveniences being scarce in Hong-kong, the sorrowful cortege on this occasion was compelled to wend its steps to the government hydrant at the end of the street! The leading actor in this ceremony of 'buying the water' was, as usual, the eldest son of the deceased, a boy about seven or eight years of age. Notwithstanding his youth, however, his part was performed with an exactness that must have resulted from a considerable amount of previous instruction. Bearing in his hand a wand covered with white indented paper, supported on each side by a female relative, and bending nearly double in token of his intense grief, this young scion of the deceased proceeded slowly and gravely in the direction of the hydrant, the 'band' meanwhile doing their best with the tom-toms and that close imitation of the Scotch bagpipe, the

Chinese pipe. Arrived at the hydrant, the party knelt around that useful apparatus; the 'musicians' redoubled their exertions, and the priest his prayers; more incense was burned, and a tremendous burst of wailing and lamentation went up from the mourners. While these performances were in operation, the youth to whom I have just referred drew, with the requisite prostrations and solemnity, a basin of water from the hydrant, and then scattered a few coins on the ground by way of payment. It is essential in this ceremony that the water should be paid for. The procession thereafter returned to the house, where doubtless the body of the deceased was washed by the boy, in compliance with the custom of his country.

After the body of the deceased is washed in this manner, it is dressed in the best clothes which belonged to the man in his lifetime, a hat being placed on his head, a fan in his hand, and shoes on his feet, the idea being that he will be clothed in these habiliments in Elysium, and consequently that he must appear there as a respectable and superior member of society. At intervals during these and subsequent ceremonies, gilt and silvered paper in the shape of coins and sycee bars is burned, in the belief that it will also pass into the invisible world, where it will be recoined into solid cash; and clothes, sedan-chairs, furniture, buffaloes and horses, made of paper, are transferred on the same principle to the 'better land' for the benefit of the dead.

The body was now brought through the window and placed in the coffin on the stage at the top of the temporary wooden structure. It is the practice with the richer Chinese to keep the coffined bodies of their relatives in their houses for long periods, sometimes for years. This custom was not followed on this occasion, for the funeral took place immediately after the ceremony of 'buying the water.' Large sums of money are expended on coffins by the 'celestials,' and a dutiful son will see that his parents are provided with these melancholy receptacles sometimes many years before their death. They are made of heavy boards four or five inches in thickness, and rounded at the outer joints, and appear to invariably take the form, in this colony, of the polished trunk of a tree. Inside, they appear to be lined with a sort of mortar; the joints are all carefully closed with a similar substance; but a small hole is drilled through the coffin over the face of the deceased, so as to leave a channel of escape and entrance for the spirits.

It was a work of some difficulty to bring the coffined body down the steep footway from the window to the road; but the task was finally accomplished without mishap, amidst the renewed wailings of the mourning-women, the shrieks of the pipe, and the belabouring of the tom-toms. Awaiting the arrival of the coffin in the street were some twenty elaborately carved and lavishly gilded sedan-chairs, constructed especially for use on such occasions. These chairs contained meats, fruits, and cakes—real and artificial—in profusion. Among other articles displayed were two excellently cooked sucking-pigs. Two or three altar-pieces, emblazoned with the name and age of the deceased, were also carried in the procession;

also banners, the deceased's tablet and photograph, and other articles—the bearers all being dressed more or less in mourning costume. Before the procession started for the burial-ground at Mount Davis, there was more wailing, more incense burned, more shrieks from the 'gusty pipe,' and more prayers from the priest. One of the last acts of the mourners was to walk round the coffin; and then the procession moved off, the coffin taking the last place in the cortège.

At Mount Davis the body was consigned to the earth with much lamentation, incense-burning, and praying. There was, however, apparently but little difference between the ceremonies engaged in at the grave, so far as the priest, the mourners, and especially the 'musicians' were concerned, and those earlier in the day. The deceased's tablet is carried back in procession to the house, and there set up in a room specially reserved for such purposes, with other tablets of the family. Before these tablets, incense is daily burned and prayers offered. The food carried in the procession is, we believe, commonly distributed among the poor; sometimes, however, a portion of it is consumed in the house.

The burial-places are sometimes selected by necromancers; and if the family be rich, this selection is often made a matter of considerable difficulty and expense. A good view for the entombed spirit is one of the chief requirements for a grave. The side of a hill overlooking water, a copse, or a ravine near a hill-top, are highly favoured spots. About the 5th April in each year, the population of the country may be seen trooping out to their tombs to repair and sweep them and make offerings. A Chinese tomb in the south of China seems invariably, so far as the outline on the ground is concerned, to take the form of the Greek letter Omega (Ω); and when raised to any height, it usually much resembles a huge armchair with a round back, the coffin being placed in the seat.

'D A N D Y.'

THE late Charles Dickens somewhere describes the relationship existing between dogs and the persons with whom they reside as of two kinds. In the one case, the owner may be said, in ordinary phrase, to keep the dog; in the other, the dog, being allowed its own way and much more, may be said to keep its reputed owner. Our own experience furnishes a third instance, in which no actual ownership existed expressed or understood—nothing but a tacit agreement or suzerainty on either side.

It was late on a wintry evening that the animal of which we write first attracted our notice. During our many years of sojourn in the Scottish metropolis, we had no previous acquaintance with him, and it is probable that he made choice of our particular doorstep as a place of refuge in distress, for no other reason than that ours was the last house in the row, and because his strength did not suffice to carry him any farther. There, at all events, we found him, crouched as far out of sight as possible behind

one of the porch-pillars, a filthy and shivering animal, apparently in the last stage of exhaustion. Hunger and cold had weakened him to such an extent that he was unable to do what he would otherwise have done, namely, to beat a retreat on being discovered. Too much accustomed to the brutalities of street-boys, he at first resented our friendly advances, but in a feeble manner; and it was not until we opened the door and admitted him to warmth and shelter, that he seemed reassured. Like the dog which Robinson Crusoe fetched from the wreck, he would speedily have ended himself, had we permitted him, with the food he so evidently needed; but after a time he began to recover; and a prolonged series of ablations—to which he apparently objected on principle—at last revealed him, literally, in his true colours. He stood confessed as a small and bandy-legged animal, which it were gross flattery to call a terrier, in the accepted sense of the term; but he was of that size, and had the broken and wiry yellow hair of the Scotch variety. For the credit of that famous breed, it must be added that he was, every inch of him, a cur of low degree, from the defective muzzle and the tattered ears to a nondescript tail docked to some two inches in length—a plebeian animal, and most probably a homeless outcast.

We had no dog of our own at the time; but nevertheless we were disinclined to adopt this ungainly specimen. In the past, we had been pardonably proud of our terriers; they were uniformly animals of aristocratic appearance and faultless pedigree. Putting aside the chance of this one being claimed—not a very strong one, we instinctively felt—it was impossible, considering our traditions, that we could be associated, publicly at all events, with a dog of this degraded type. It was an understood thing, also, from the time that the long dynasty of dogs in our house came to an end, that none were to succeed them. The successive deaths of our former pets had so deeply affected the younger members of the household, that the elders had registered a mental vow that we were not to have any more dogs. We had thus no vacancy; and yet we were reluctant to set this poor wanderer again adrift. At last it was agreed, as a compromise, that he should be kept for a few days, in order that his description might be advertised. Notice was accordingly handed in at the nearest police station, and an advertisement of his points—they were painfully weak—inserted in the newspapers for several days. It must have been, we think, our low estimate of his market value which prevented us from giving the customary warning that he would be sold to pay expenses if not claimed. We did not, at all events, employ this threat. It is extremely doubtful, even if we had found a purchaser, if the price would have repaid us for the cost of one of the advertisements.

Perhaps it was the dog's own delicacy of feeling at causing so much irrecoverable outlay, perhaps it was only his restlessness, but, in any case, while in course of being advertised, he suddenly disappeared. Taking advantage of an open door, he had, we were told by an eye-witness, fled precipitately. We were rather relieved by his

departure than otherwise. After some weeks, and when we had quite forgotten him, he suddenly reappeared, a shade less dirty, but as exhausted as before. Giving him one more chance, he remained three days with us, made another short sally out, returned next evening, and then stayed with us—he evidently found he could not do better—for eight years and seven months. We called him Dandy.

Apart from his natural inability to tell us of his antecedents, he was in many ways a puzzle to us for a long time. It was difficult to say in what sphere of life he had been brought up, or if he had been trained at all. It must have been only in a superficial manner. His single accomplishment—very imperfectly performed—consisted in standing erect on his hind-legs for a few seconds at a time, an attitude which became him so wretchedly ill, that most people, not dog-lovers, viewing his ungraceful proportions, would have pronounced him, on the instant, a low-bred whelp; while others, more discerning, would have added confirmed outcast and irreclaimable thief. Very probably, any thievish propensities on his part were, however, with us prevented by anticipation, as, through the mistaken kindness of our domestics, he invariably had far too much to eat. He was a gourmand rather than a *gourmet*, so he had little temptation. But we would not have trusted him if hungry, believing that from lack of early training he had no great depth of moral principle.

There were profound depths in him, nevertheless. As the result, we believe, of having had to fight his own way from an early age, he was, in the vulgar acceptance of the term, 'deep'—principally shown in a surprising acquaintance with the ways of town-life generally, and an easy familiarity with the thoroughfares in particular. Take him from one extremity of Edinburgh to the other, contrive to lose him in the most out-of-the-way-streets, and in all probability he was home before you by some short-cut of his own. But as a rule, he preferred to ramble alone, and did so habitually. He always showed, however, a fine discernment as to returning for the dinner-hour. We think we see him yet, setting up the street, with his characteristic slinking trot marked by a slight limp, ever on guard against message-boys who threw their empty baskets at him, and watchful for street Arabs who might have designs against his life; for this reason, affecting, when practicable, the roadway rather than the pavement; generally a dog about town, and not to be taken in with its snares and pitfalls. He did not make friends abroad, was utterly deaf to the addresses of strangers, and had a custom, when meeting errand-lads in the street, of making a cautious *detour* to avoid them, which was a sight to behold. Such was his outdoor temperament.

But—to use a stereotyped biographical phrase—it was in the family circle that his amiability shone forth; for he was deep in his affection also. Of all the dogs we ever possessed, he was by far the most human. Instinctively, he divined the character of those living in the house, knew well those who liked him, and those who were cold to him; and won, with all his plainness—and it was not little—the hearts of all the servants. To those attached to him, he showed

himself sympathetic with dog-sympathy, and had the most uncouthly winning ways, which were irresistible. To those who know what dog-companionship is, it may suffice to say that he was a true and loving friend. Remembering his amiable traits, we cannot forget that his whimsicalities were endless. A love for strong tea, apparently with him a familiar stimulant; much futile pretence of searching for rats, of which he never caught one; a rooted aversion to hearing any one reading aloud, are amongst the list. For the last reason, he systematically absented himself from family prayers, reappearing at their conclusion in the highest possible spirits, as in regard to a matter finally disposed of.

To the reader, it may appear singular that a dog so evidently well acquainted with the city, if he really belonged to any household within its boundaries, should not succeed in finding his home. Our own conclusion was that his owner, if he really had one, must have left the locality, otherwise his dog in his many wanderings would soon have discovered him. This proved to be the case; for we obtained latterly one inkling, but only one, as to the dog's former career. It happened in this way. Taking a walk one day along a country road in the outskirts—with Dandy at our heels, for a wonder—we happened to exchange a few remarks with a working-man walking in the same direction. He seemed to eye our dog with some curiosity, and at last inquired how we became possessed of him. We told him the circumstances. He laughed, and remarked: 'I've seen that one before. He's a well-known dog that, sir, on the line.'—'On the line?' we echoed inquiringly.—'Yes,' he replied; 'on the North British Railway. They'll know that dog about the loco-sheds at the Waverley Station and St Margaret's, I expect, if you were to take him there. Why, he was an engine-dog that!' So it seemed, indeed; for our informant went on to tell us that our Dandy had formerly been the companion of an engine-driver, and that—a common enough thing—the dog used to ride with him on his trips. Further, that the man had for some reason or other quitted the North British Railway and the town, and, curiously enough, left the dog behind him. 'He is a sharp dog that, sir,' ended the narrator—'an old-fashioned character!'

That was all we ever heard about Dandy's former life. It was probably true enough. The estimate of his abilities was assuredly correct. One thing is certain—a dog accustomed to find his way in the maze of the station traffic, and to play hide-and-seek between the wagon-wheels, would be but inconvenienced with a lengthy tail. It might get him into mischief, and be in the way generally. It was probably on this account—if not as the result of an accident—that our Dandy had been prudently docked. This mode of life would also explain much of the dog's habitual restlessness. From a daily ride on a locomotive—no one can say for how long—to a settled town residence, must have been a great change.

There is little more to be told; but what remains is as mysterious as the beginning. Our dog grew old. Changes which might not formerly have affected him, now seemed to distress him. He grew strongly conservative; and when we

changed our town residence, Dandy never took to the new house, and went back to inflict himself on the tenants of our former one. Through old age or ill-temper, or both, he would not be comforted at home. One day he went out, which was nothing unusual, and never returned, which was quite unlike him, as he was essentially of a recurrent type. What befell him, we never knew. We advertised his description widely, and mourned for him not a little. As he came, so he went, and he returns no more. We prefer, as he was old and partially blind, not to speculate as to his end. We shall not readily forget him. These to his memory. We have never had a dog since.

THE BLIND BOY TO HIS SISTER.

Mr Sister, pray, what is Light?
I oft hear you say, as you speak of the day,
'Tis beautiful, 'tis bright;
And methinks I might be as happy as thou,
Could I know aught of Light.

Is it like or allied to Sound?
Does it warble along with the sweetness of song,
Or spring on high with a bound,
Like the swell of a chorus, throwing o'er us
Music's enchantment profound?

Oh, Sound is a heavenly thing,
A limitless measure of varied pleasure;
Of joy a perpetual spring;
The soul of devotion, rapture, emotion,
Rising for ever on viewless wing.

It rings in the children's voices,
Like the carol on high of the lark in the sky,
When the young glad heart rejoices;
It bids hence care, whispers hope to despair,
And speaks through myriad voices.

Or is Light like the song of birds,
When they chant their loves 'mid the depths of the groves,
In melody sweet without words?
Or the ripple of the rill, when the winds are still,
O'er the pebbles that pave the fords?

Ah! vain are my fancies, I see,
With that inward sight, in my endless night,
Which tells me, my Sister, of thee.
But I know Light is real, though you cannot reveal
Its gorgeous nature to me.

You say 'tis ineffably bright,
But its glory and glow I never can know
Till God shall endue me with sight;
And you pray this may be, when together we
Shall enter His realms of light.

You I love as I loved my mother,
Whose spirit has flown, and left us alone
To bless and console each other:
And how good you must be, to pray for me,
Your loving, but poor, blind brother.

J. W.

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